

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: MIL/CI

SUBJECT: PENDING AWARDS TO CHILEAN MILITARY PERSONNEL

1. THE DEFENSE ATTACHE OFFICE IN SANTIAGO HOLDS FOURTEEN MILITARY AWARDS FOR CHILEAN MILITARY PERSONNEL. NO AWARDS HAVE BEEN PRESENTED SINCE SEPTEMBER 1973. THE AWARDS INCLUDE TWO LEGIONS OF MERIT, DEGREE OF COMMANDER AWARDED TO THE THEN CINC OF THE CHILEAN NAVY (NOV 70 - MAY 73) AND THE CINC CHILEAN MARINE CORPS. THERE ARE FIVE LEGIONS OF MERIT, DEGREE OF OFFICER, AWARDED TO TWO CHILEAN AIR FORCE OFFICERS AND THREE CHILEAN ARMY OFFICERS FOR SERVICE AS CHILEAN ATTACHES IN WASHINGTON. THERE ARE SEVEN COMMENDATION MEDALS AWARDED TO TWO CHILEAN AIR FORCE OFFICERS AND FIVE CHILEAN ARMY OFFICERS FOR SERVICE AS GUEST INSTRUCTORS, CADRE, OR MEMBERS OF STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAMS WITH THE INTERAMERICAN AIR FORCE ACADEMY AND THE U.S. ARMY SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS IN THE CANAL ZONE.

2. THESE OFFICERS WERE ALL NOMINATED FOR THE AWARDS BASED
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ON THEIR PERSONAL SERVICES TO THE UNITED STATES. IN THE

CASE OF THE ATTACHES, THEY WORKED CLOSELY WITH THE RESPECTIVE U.S. SERVICE DURING THEIR STAY IN WASHINGTON, BECAME THOROUGHLY ACQUAINTED WITH THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE, AND ARE UNIVERSALLY STRONG SUPPORTS OF THE UNITED STATES. THE GUEST LECTURERS AND EXCHANGE PROGRAM OFFICERS CONTRIBUTED DIRECTLY TO THE SUCCESS OF THE U.S. EFFORT AT THE SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS AND THE INTERAMERICAN AIR FORCE ACADEMY AND ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO LATIN AMERICAN SOLIDARITY AND A BETTER UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND LATIN AMERICA. NONE OF THESE AWARDS IS FOR SERVICE IN CHILE EXCEPT IN THE CASE OF THE PREVIOUS NAVY CINC AND PRESENT MARINE CORPS CINC AND BOTH OF THOSE FOR PERIODS PRIOR TO SEPTEMBER 1973. ALL FALL WHOLLY WITHIN THE PATTERN OF AWARDS NORMALLY GRANTED BY USG IN THIS REGION.

3. EACH OF THE OFFICERS CONCERNED IS WELL AWARE THAT TRADITIONALLY AN AWARD HAS BEEN MADE FOR THESE SERVICES AND HAS EXPRESSED CONCERN AND/OR DISAPPOINTMENT THAT THE AWARD IS NOT FORTHCOMING. FURTHER DELAY COULD BECOME AN IMPORTANT FACTOR SOURING THE RELATIONS AND ATTITUDE OF OUTSTANDING CHILEAN MILITARY PERSONNEL WHO ARE FRIENDLY TOWARDS THE U.S. AND SYMPATHETIC TO OUR VIEWPOINT.

4. WE RECOGNIZE THAT PRESENTATION OF THESE AWARDS IS VIRTUALLY CERTAIN TO RECEIVE PRESS ATTENTION, AND THAT THERE WILL BE SOME UNFAVORABLE CONGRESSIONAL AND PRESS REACTION. THIS MAY MAKE IT EVEN MORE DIFFICULT TO KEEP OUR LINES OF COMMUNICATION WITH CHILE OPEN IN A USEFUL WAY. ON THE OTHER HAND, SUCH AWARDS HAVE LONG BEEN ROUTINELY MADE HERE. THEY WOULD BE WIDELY ACCLAIMED IN CHILE. AS MORE MEDALS ACCUMULATE FOR FUTURE SERVICES BY CHILEAN MILITARY PERSONNEL, THE SITUATION WILL BECOME INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT IF WE DO NOT MOVE.

5. ON BALANCE, WE WOULD BE SOMEWHAT INCLINED TO PROCEED WITH THE PRESENTATION OF THE MEDALS NOW, AT SMALL, DISCREET FUNCTIONS, AND TAKE THE INEVITABLE FLAK. PRIOR TO A DECISION, HOWEVER, WE WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S VIEWS. IN ANY CASE, FOR TACTICAL REASONS, MEDALS PRESENTATIONS WOULD NOT BE MADE BEFORE CONGRESS COMPLETES ACTION ON SECURITY ASSISTANCE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LEGISLATION AT THAT STAGE, ASSUMING THE WORST CASE FOR CHILE, THE AWARDS PRESENTATION MIGHT HAVE SOME SMALL COUNTERVAILING EFFECT.
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